

My name is Allison Quirion of Hebron, Connecticut and I am submitting written testimony in opposition to House Bill 5447, An Act Concerning Implementing the Recommendations of the Auditors of Public Accounts Concerning Private Providers of Special Education.

House Bill 5447 as raised will limit how much money schools, both public and private, are allowed to spend on private providers. By creating a fee schedule that caps what private providers charge it would in turn also restrict what a district can spend on a contract. This means that a school district may no longer be able to afford its consultants like contracted BCBAs, SLPs, OTs, PTs, etc should they exceed the set rate cap and districts will no longer hire agencies and contractors based on the quality of services/need of student, but on who is willing to provide services at a scheduled rate. This includes contracted consultants that see child for related services as well as the contract for experts conducting individual educational evaluations (IEEs).

Our children are entitled to a Free and Appropriate Education, which does not come with a fee cap. Although, I see the need to investigate the costs that are charged by private special education providers, which districts are obligated to expend on behalf of a student to receive a Free and Appropriate Education, I do not think setting a fee cap by the Connecticut State Department of Education should not take place without first determining the unintended consequences by setting a cap. i.e. determining providers based upon cost vs. need for an appropriate education.

I oppose this bill as written.